

THE COUNTY & DISTRICT LAW PRESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION DES BÂTONNIERS DE COMTÉS ET DISTRICTS

Randall S. Boccock, Chair



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In Depth Analysis of Justice System in Ontario

Ontario – The County and District Law Presidents' Association (CDLPA) has completed a landmark in-depth analysis of the justice system in Ontario which shows a system that is facing many challenges including court backlogs, and a lack of judicial resources in many jurisdictions in Ontario.

“This survey is one of the most comprehensive ever put together by a legal group. Each County and District Law Association President in Ontario was sent a survey to canvass their members about the judicial system,” said Randall Boccock, Chair of the County and District Law Presidents' Association.

The survey aimed to find out about current service levels and acceptable standards of service. It also set out to identify areas for improvement, and to find out if technological resources could help reduce the strain on the system. Finally, the survey sought to find out how lawyers believe the system could be improved.

Some of the findings from the forty-one page report include:

- 26 out of 32 responding jurisdictions reported that child protection matters are not meeting the required time frames as out in the Family Law Rules Regulations. Haldimand, Oxford, Prescott/Russell, Renfrew, Kenora and Thunder Bay report that the time frames are being met.
- 32 out of 41 responding jurisdictions support the idea of having judges specialize in specific subjects, similar to the way lawyers practice in specific areas of law.
- 28 of the responding jurisdictions have access to video and teleconferencing technology. Of the 28 jurisdictions that responded directly to the question, 19 said they like the technology, five say it isn't being used regularly and three say it isn't an effective use of resources. Disadvantages included technical problems, particularly in northern communities.
- Judges need to be appointed to both the Ontario and Superior Court of Justice in many jurisdictions. Further, many respondents reported that Judges are performing routine administrative tasks, such as scheduling, which could be better performed by administrative staff or trial coordinators.

“This was a comprehensive grass roots effort to ask the profession their views on how the system is working and how it can be improved. The report has allowed us to set benchmarks for acceptable timeframes between major events within the litigation process,” said Janet Whitehead, Co-Chair of Judicial Resources Survey Committee.

“We’ve also been able to determine which areas of the province are meeting those time frames to ensure access to justice for those who are using the system. Despite the many challenges facing the system, we were pleased to find some jurisdictions not only meeting the challenges but overcoming them as well,” said Whitehead.

“This survey has already been given to the Ministry of The Attorney General and The Department of Justice. It has always been our goal to work with The Ministry and Justice Department to improve access to justice in Ontario,” said Paul Kowalyshyn, out-going Chair of CDLPA. “There are fifteen recommendations in the report which we believe will help improve the system.”

The County and District Law Presidents’ Association represents 46 member Associations in Ontario and over 7,100 members of the practicing bar. 41 of the 46 associations responded to the survey.

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